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A FRIENDLY ADMONITION: OR, Good Counsel TO THE Roman Catholicks IN THIS KINGDOM.

By *MARTIN MASON.*

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A friendly Admonition; or, good Counsel to the Roman Catholicks in this Kingdome.

SHall I need to tell you that this small Transcript in the tenderness of my love is sent unto you? Or, can you believe me that in the integrity of my soul for the good of yours, this friendly Admonition is thus published by me? If so, then possibly it may meet with a kind reception from you: But, however, I must deal plainly with you; and when I have cleared my Conscience to you, (whether you hear or forbear) I shall be clear of you in the day of the Lord.

Ever since *Cain* contracted upon himself the innocent blood of his Brother *Abel*, the Seed of Innocency hath suffered wrong and injury, and met with Persecution from the spirit of Enmity. The truth of this Assertion is so clear to the wisest of you, that I need not trouble my self to prove it to you.

That the Church of Christ is of a Lamb-like Spirit, clothed with Innocency, Meekness, Love, Pitty and Compassion to all people, the wise in heart amongst you cannot but acknowledge. *Lo, I send you*, said Christ, *as Sheep amongst Wolves*. And were not they harmless Sheep indeed? and did they not meet with many Wolves? Did ever any of the true Followers of the Lamb put on a wolvish spirit, or use carnal violence to win a Convert? Or, did ever external compulsion convert a Sinner unto God? Are not the Tares and the Wheat to grow together? *&c.* Is it not an undeniable Truth, *That which is not of Faith, is sin*; and *Faith is the gift of God*? Is not conversion of a soul from sin, the inward work of the Spirit of God? Can any thing draw the mind to God, but the holy Spirit of God? Did ever Persecution obtain its desired end, and bring a blessing upon the Persecutors?

These things premised, let me expostulate a little further with you:

Have you not formerly been in a ſuffering-ſtate your ſelves more or leſs concerning the exerciſe of your Conſciences towards God? hath not the Rod of Authority heretofore been held over you, and a bridle to you? Have not ſome of the Laws ſeemed to diſcountenance you? Are there not yet penal Laws in being (though little made uſe of) againſt you? Did you not count it hard meaſure when the yoak of the Prelates was upon you? Did you not earneſtly and ſubmiſſively then plead for Liberty to tender Conſciences? would you not then have been paſtorally glad of that Indulgence which the Clemency of the King now vouchſafes unto you? Was it not then eſteemed a Perſecution by you, when the Laws at any time were put in execution againſt you? How ordinary was it with you to plead for Toleration? and now that you have it, can you not therewith be contented? Be not ſo ingrateful unto God, nor ſo unworthy to your King, as to ſlight the Mercies of the Lord, and abuſe the Favour of your Prince. What, muſt you needs monopolize *Cæſar* to your ſelves? muſt the Sun ſhine upon no ground but your own? How comes it that you are or would be eſteemed ſo tranſcendently deſerving of that Royal Priviledge above all other People? Certainly, God intends it not to the beſt of the ſons of men. Is it not Favour ſufficient for you, that *Cæſar* ſmiles upon you, but you muſt turn his frowns towards us, and ſet the edge of his Authority againſt an Innocent People? Is not his ſuſpention of the penal Laws againſt you, a large demonſtration of his Princely Favour to you? What, will nothing but the Throne content you? Certainly, that will ſet the affections of many thouſands in the Nation againſt you: O that there were more true Humility amongſt you, that the Wiſdom of God were with you, that this Ambitious Itch were taken from you, and the pure Love and Innocency of the Lamb of God more abounded in you. Certainly, it would be far ſafer for you to reſt where you are, than to riſe up and fall; for God will make War with *Amalek* to all Generations.

Never ſhall any People proſper who uſe Perſecution, and ſeek to eſtabliſh their Religion by a carnal Compulſion. Conſcience is Chriſt's Throne; Kings and Lovers do not uſe to

love

love Corrivals: Be wise therefore in time, and take not too much upon you, lest that which you have be taken from you: Say not within your selves, the Strength of the Nation now is for us, Come, let us inrich our selves in the Ruines of the People; for though the God of our Innocency may suffer you for a season to mount a little higher than yet you are; yea, if he should give you the necks of your enemies, the proud *Prelates* and *Presbyters*, to tread upon, yet know this assuredly, if your intentions be to build *Sion* with blood, and force all others to bend unto you, your design will deceive you, the blood-thirsty spirit is not of God, nor shall such as are guided by it live out half their dayes: That spirit which seeketh its own honour more than the Praise of God, ever meets with blastings instead of blessings from God. You need not go far for a proof of this Assertion. How many Over-turnings hath this Nation witnessed within these thirty years, and all because Iniquity hath abounded, God hath been dishonoured, Solemn Engagements to God (for Christian Liberty to his People) violated, and tender Consciences oppressed? and shall the same (if not greater) sins lye at your door, and the destroying Angel not enter into your houses, if you repent not and give Glory to God? If you find it so, then you may say there is no God in *Israel*.

This therefore I have to say unto you, and O that my words might be wisely pondered by you, and get a good entrance into you.

Let not vain imaginations any longer deceive you, for as sure as the Grapes of *Sodom*, and the Fruits of *Gomorrah* are found amongst you, the hand of God will overtake you: Let his Witness search you; and if he spared not others that are gone before you for their Treachery to God, and Oppressing of his People, think not you, whose Idolatries and Sins be equal with, or surmount theirs (for where you have Power, your little Fingers are heavier than their Loins) to escape divine Justice; for God will reckon with you, and render a Reward unto you according to your Deeds: I say, be not deceived, God will not be mocked; such as you sow, such shall you reap: When therefore you are in the height of your strength,

ſtrength, let not Wiſdom and Moderation be ſtrangers to you, nor a furious Spirit of Revenge be active in you: Happy would it be for you, could you conquer in Love, firſt your own unreaſonable wills, and then with innocency, love, and patience, win the Affections of the People: Could you be as well contented to give Toleration to tender Conſciences, as not long ſince you were willing to take it for your ſelves, how eaſily and how honourably might you enjoy it? and till then, however you may feed your ſelves with conceits and fancies, God's peace in your Conſciences will never be your portion: If you attempt the Ruine of his innocent People, you will be found fighting againſt God, and engage him to make War with you, and will not he be too Potent for you? Surely deſtruction and miſery without mercy will be their lot whoſe delight is in cruelty.

Therefore take warning in time and be awakened: Deſiſt from all cruel Enterprizes; turn your minds to the royal Seed of God in your own Conſciences, and hearken to the holy dictates of God's holy Oracle in your hearts; Bow in time and bend unto it, leſt for your diſobedience you be broken by it; Break off the chains of Iniquity, wherewith the Enemy of your Souls doth imbondage you; Waſh you, make you clean, believe in the Light of Jeſus while it is with you, that he may be a Saviour to you; That which condemns ſin in you, would overcome ſin for you, would you but turn at the Reproof which comes from the Spirit of the Lord in your own hearts: Could you truly witneſs true victory over ſin, that would be more honourable than the conqueſt of a Kingdom: Oh! that you would put on the holy Armour of God, then would you be a royal Camp indeed, an harmleſs, holy, and an honourable People. It would be ſafer for you to ſeek Reconcilement with God, and to live at peace with all men, than ſeek to lord it over all men in the exerciſe of their Conſciences towards God; ſo would the Prayers and Tears of God's People mount up to the Throne of Mercy for you, and be of greater force and efficacy with the Lord on your behalf than all your Maſſes are, or yet, poor Souls, you are aware of.

And

And as for that innocent, despised, yet noble-minded People, reproachfully called *Quakers*, there is no evil in their hearts towards you, nor towards any of the Children of men; but in the integrity of their Souls, they desire God may be merciful unto you, who through ignorance add unto their Afflictions, not knowing what you do: Therefore, let not your hearts be filled with prejudice against them, nor your ears too open to receive, nor your hearts too ready to believe false reports concerning them; When you find them really in Rebellion against good Government, do not spare them; but till then, I warn you, in the Name of the Lord, do not oppress them, nor in the secret of your hearts conspire to be the ruine of them, but be filled with Christian love, innocency, and meekness towards them; for I am bold to testifie for them, they are as dear unto the Lord as the apple of his eye, and that Soul that troubles or persecutes them for the exercise of their Consciences to God, shall feel the indignation of God.

And if ever the Lord suffer you, for the sins of the People, to make use of your Armour, and be a Rod to them that are better than your selves, delight not in Cruelty, but love Mercy, and be cloathed with Pity and Compassion towards all men, when 'tis in your power, that you may find mercy when your work is done, for you will have need of it; therefore glory not in your own strength, nor think not to make the Consciences of the Innocent bow unto you, because their Persons are lyable to be afflicted by you; for though such may suffer under you, yet can their Innocency never be conquered by you: for Jesus hath chosen us, and we have chosen Him as our General in our holy harmless War against the Man of Sin, the Mystery of Iniquity, wherein our Weapons are not carnal: but in the Kingdom of our Consciences, neither Pope nor King shall come, but Christ; yet to *Cæsar* we can give the things that are *Cæsars*; and to none but God, the things that are Gods.

Had Charles *no worser Enemies than I,*
Charles, *by the Hand of Man, should never die.*

Thus

289 Thus have I in the integrity of my heart, breathed a little of my Love unto you, and laid good Counsel before you; what remains but that I leave it with you, and breath in secret to the Lord for you, that if it be his good will and pleasure, the words of sound Wisdom may take place with you, and not be slighted or rejected by you; Happy were it for you, could you delight in Innocency, and love that noble Seed in your selves, which counsels you to depart from Iniquity, and would have you do to all men as you would have all men do unto you, so would the blessing of God be upon you, his delight would be to exalt you, and he would cloth you with honour in the sight of the People. But if his own dear Seed in you still be under-valued, and its good counsel be set at nought, or slighted by you, and your sins preferred above that which would overcome sin for you; if instead of meekness you act with fury and madness; if you think to make the Consciences of the Righteous bow unto you, shame and confusion will assuredly fall upon, and an ill savour you will be unto all Generations.

Lincoln, 10th day,
9th Month, 1662.

MARTIN MASON.

THE END.